

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
November 30, 2005, 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers**

PRESENT

Cindy Felsten
Greg Lewis
Jay Myers
Wes Roy
Barbara Stevens
Marie Schroeder

ABSENT

Gil Palmer
Ian Kohen
Chrystal Pushor
John Roberts
Jason Staley

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy Director Lorraine Smith, Secretary Lula Young.

STAFF ABSENT:

Director Arlette Tinsley

The meeting began as a general discussion due to lack of a quorum.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Deputy Director Smith informed Commissioners of multiple trainings, casework and technical assistance meetings within the office. Technical assistance was provided to a former complainant with a sex in housing complaint and an incident of potential retaliation was resolved. Assistance was provided to parents involving disability in education, which appears close to resolution.

Deputy Director Smith provided the following breakdown of recent casework: An EEOC mediation was hosted on site. A disability in employment case was filed with EEOC that involves a personality test utilized by businesses called the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory). This case involves the same issue with the same business discussed recently at an EEOC conference attended by staff and a Commissioner. Additional cases filed were a race in housing, sex in employment and four cases involving the same respondents for national origin in housing. Staff is currently in the process of scheduling two mediations with Commissioners Felsten and Stevens serving as mediators.

Director Tinsley completed multiple trainings and received an invitation to provide the anti-bullying & harassment training for St. Peter's Lutheran School in December. She provided the

legal perspective, "On Being Gay" at the Center for Teaching and Learning. Both the director and deputy director provided a presentation on diversity for Leadership Bartholomew County. Director Tinsley provided a historical perspective of diversity in Bartholomew County. Deputy Director Smith developed a diversity self-assessment and resource guide to aid individuals with their incorporation of diversity into work and personal lives. Tracy Souza and Dominic Glover provided an overview of the Heritage Fund's Welcoming Community Outreach Project and the results obtained from the focus groups. Susie Blizzard from I.U.P.U.C. provided exercises on communication and diversity.

An East High School student, who is a senior and a Nigerian female, has selected as her senior project the development of a brochure for students on how to handle harassment in the schools. Director Tinsley will serve as her mentor for this process. Commissioner Lewis requested his name be provided as an additional contact for Miss Ebun Okuleye as he knows the student and since he is at the school, he can provide immediate feedback and support.

Deputy Director Smith also advised that Chairperson Palmer attended the meeting of the Audit and Review Committee and met the new police chief, Bill Martin. Chief Martin did send a letter of introduction to the Gay/Straight Alliance. Commissioner Myers shared staffing announcements from the police department; Ron Hoskins is now a Captain supervising administration and Lt. Matt Myers has returned to the Public Information Officer position. Commissioner Lewis offered his services as an intermediary or liaison with the new chief and Captain Hoskins as he knows them both.

Director Tinsley also provided anti-bullying and harassment training at the request of Jennings County middle school teachers who could not attend the state sponsored training. Deputy Director Smith advised that she is facilitating the new commissioner training on December 7th covering the historical aspect of the Commission.

Deputy Director Smith shared the positive results reported by Warren Baumgart on behalf of the C.A.A.C. and P.I.E. during a meeting with Debra Haza and Deborah Hammond on behalf of local Native Americans. Chairperson Palmer and Vice chair Myers were commended for their successful efforts in bringing the two groups to the table.

Deputy Director Smith informed Commissioners that staff is preparing information for the year-end report to the mayor and city council and that Ann King was hired as a temporary part-time employee to assist in getting files in order and caught up to start the new year.

LIAISON UPDATES – G/SA:

Deputy Director Smith provided information supplied by Commissioner Kohen who attended the recent G/SA meeting. Commissioner Kohen encouraged Commissioners and staff to attend an upcoming G/SA event at Yes Cinema on Friday, December 02, 2005. Commissioner Felsten provided details of a wine and cheese reception beginning at 7pm and a family friendly concert featuring Tim Grimm beginning an 8pm, a silent auction as a fundraiser for the Alliance. Deputy Director Smith reported that Commissioner Kohen also advised of upcoming events including Christmas and New Year's functions with additional details to follow; Commissioner Kohen is attempting to verify that there may be a GLBT affinity

group forming at Cummins. The G/SA again voiced interest in training the community jointly with the Commission.

LIAISON UPDATES – CULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE:

Commissioner Roy advised that the C.A.C. entertained extensive discussion about the recent community book read issue. Committee Chairperson, Rob Aspy is anticipating more involvement by the cultural awareness committee and is taking steps to make changes that will be highly visible in the New Year. Commissioner Roy advised that effective 2006, he will be facilitating a strategic planning session for the Committee in 2006. He is very excited about the C.A.C. being asked to be a part of making some recommendations for goals and objectives for the Human Rights Commission and is looking forward to becoming more involved and collaborating with the HRC in 2006 after new appointments have been made.

** With the arrival of Commissioner Schroeder, Vice Chairperson Myers officially called the meeting to order.*

Vice Chairperson Myers updated Commissioner Schroeder on the status of the meeting and then requested questions from the Commission for Commissioner Roy.

Commissioner Roy reiterated the excitement of the C.A.C. in being involved in future potential collaborations. Deputy Director Smith discussed how the Commission always has to balance advocacy and collaboration with different groups without harming the Commission's ability to file complaints and historically, projects are considered on a case-by-case basis. The Commission had a very successful collaboration this year with C.A.C. when they co-sponsored a Cultural Competency Training for business and school leaders. Deputy Director Smith advised that some developed wording was added to the Goals and Objectives, phrased in a way that would allow the HRC to evaluate each project specifically and keep an avenue open for collaboration.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Commissioner Schroeder called roll. **Commissioner Lewis moved to accept the minutes of the regular full commission meeting of September 28, 2005. Commissioner Schroeder seconded. Motion passed.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Felsten reported, as of October 30, 2005 the balance was \$6,199.02. Same balance as November as there were no changes, balance remains at \$6,199.02.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Deputy Director Smith provided Commissioners with suggested changes to the goals and objectives. She then advised Commissioners that the 2006 Goals and Objectives are based

upon the 2005 template. Director Tinsley had previously sent, via email, some suggestions about possible additions for the 2006 Goals and Objectives and requested Commissioner input.

In discussion of the suggested amendment, *“Cultural Awareness Committee – maintain appointee and provide technical assistance, an project collaboration as requested and as applicable to the Cultural Awareness Committee”*, the Commissioners agreed that since any collaboration is brought before the Commission anyway, the goal could remain as written in the 2005 goals.

Commissioners reviewed and discussed the following additions and/or amendments to the

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

ENFORCING THE ORDINANCE:

- ***Set up a committee to study updating the ordinance***

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC:

- ***Set up Committee*** to explore implementation of Peace Learning Center curriculum for local kids.
- ***Set up Committee to explore implementation of Anti-Defamation League Peer Diversity Trainer Program***
- ***Set up Committee to explore implementation of Anti-Defamation League Diversity Training for teachers/educators***
- Continue to provide technical assistance and training to local businesses, ***organizations and schools*** as requested, as office schedule allows. . .
- ***Pursue feasibility of beginning phase II of the Oral History Project.***
- Update the Columbus Cultural Connection Website
- ***Continue Anti-bully/Anti-harassment Training as requested***

NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY:

- Maintain Commission representative on community's Gay/Straight Alliance, Transit Committee, Mayor's Cultural Awareness committee, BCSC's conflict resolution committee, ***BCSC Anti-Bullying Task Force, Audit & Review Committee and LBC.***
- ***Continue to provide training and technical assistance to LBC***

CHALLENGING ATTITUDES & SYSTEMS THAT CREATE BARRIERS TO EQUALITY:

- Cultural Awareness Committee – maintain appointee and provide technical assistance, as requested

Commissioners Myers, Stevens and Felsten volunteered to work on studying and updating the ordinance. Commissioner Roberts was added by Vice-chair Myers as he previously voiced an interest in this topic.

Commissioner Schroeder is interested in taking on updating the Columbus Cultural Connection website and will get together with the secretary and develop a plan.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to accept the Goals and Objectives as amended, Commissioner Felsten seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

As Vice Chair Myers had to leave, Commissioner Stevens moved to adjourn the official meeting. Commissioner Schroeder seconded. Meeting adjourned.

ANNUAL DINNER:

Deputy Director Smith updated the remaining Commissioners on the status of the annual dinner speaker. Commissioner Felsten has accomplished much to secure Tavis Smiley as a speaker for the annual dinner. Commissioners will be notified upon receipt of a definite answer from The Smiley Group. Commissioners were asked to review the biographical information on Professor Gonzales and consider the Professor or Dr. Jolly as an alternative speaker.

OTHER:

Commissioner Felsten reported on the presentation at the CTL, "On Being Gay". Commissioner Felsten stated that the presentation, which included perspectives from Religious, Scientific/Academic and Legal environments, was done very well.